

# EPIC Smart Phrase and Patient Education Tips

Use these tips when writing any items in EPIC that patients will read.

## Content

- Try to keep words to 2 syllables or less and sentences to 20 words or less
- Spell out symbols and abbreviations
- What is need to know versus nice to know information?
- Provide a rationale for key behaviors
- Use plain language; define medical terms and explain unfamiliar words
- Share our public facing patient education site for resources:  
To find patient education items online, visit [www.uhhospitals.org/seidmaneducation](http://www.uhhospitals.org/seidmaneducation)

## Tone

- Write as if you are talking to the reader – conversational
- Use strong action verbs such as call, ask, take
- Give specific instructions

## Formatting

- Break information into sections for large amounts of content
- Use a minimum of 12 point Times New Roman for text – **only use black text**
- Beware of too many bullet points – can cause bullet fatigue
- Use **bold** to emphasize points instead of ALL CAPS, *italics* or underlining

Preferred plain language terms	Avoid using these terms
Doctor, Nurse practitioner	Physician, NP
Medicines, pills	Medications
Visit	Appointment
2 times a day, each morning	2x a day, each am
Less than or greater than, above or below	< or >
Keep an eye on, watch	Monitor
By mouth	Oral

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## Plain Language Resources

[Plain language medical dictionary](#)

[Just plain clear](#) – plain language thesaurus

## Questions?

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